Alyssa Truffer

ISTC 301

Assistive Technology

**From visiting the websites and viewing the videos in Part I of the assignment, what information did you learn about assistive technology for disabled individuals?**

Technology plays such a vital role when it comes to the education of students with disabilities. Without technology many students would be unable to communicate, participate, or demonstrate their learning. The video “Assistive Technology Aiding Dreams” demonstrated how the use of technology helps students with disabilities in the classroom, but it also plays a large part in students participating in activities they enjoy such as playing an instrument. Students enter the classroom with a wide range of learning styles, with strengths and weaknesses in different areas. One this I found fascinating was the use of communication aids for different students. The video where Ellen is explaining how she communicates using two switches to select certain icons which allow her to put together words and sentences to get her thought across. Similar to Ellen, the younger students using these communication aids was also really interesting. One of the younger students, a little boy who only have control over is eyebrows showed how technology can be adapted to fit the specific needs of one individual. As Susanna explained in the “Assistive Technology” video, without technology she would be unable to be where she is in her education today. **Were there any sites, products, or resources that particularly impressed you and that you want to remember as you prepare to become a classroom teacher?**

As a teacher I feel it is important to know as much as possible about the different technologies available for students in the classroom. Looking through the different products on the National Center for Assistive Technology website, you really see how many different types of technology can be integrated into the classroom. I was surprised to see pencil grips as a form of technology. They can be used to help students who have difficulty handling objects and allow them to get a better grip so they can write using pencils. Also, it would be helpful to understand how different forms of assistive technology work. For example, the communication devices students with serious disabilities can use appear very complicated to someone who has never experienced it before. Having the knowledge about the different technologies that can be used is a key point for a teacher. Understanding the technology students need in order to succeed is a primary step when it comes to educating students with different needs.

**What promises/potentials does technology provide for students with diverse learning needs?**

Technology allows students with disabilities to be more involved in their learning in the classroom. Without certain technologies, many students would be unable to succeed in school. In the videos, it was clear to see how advanced technology is and how helpful it is to these students. It allows them to communicate and show their knowledge, they are able to construct papers and essays, it helps them to move from place to place, etc. Also, technology assists individuals in more than just their learning. In the video we were introduced to Lukas Bratcher, a student with a condition causing him to have stiff joints as well as missing some of the muscles in his limbs. Although, it is difficult for him to use his hands, through the use of technology, he is able to play the horn.

**Have you ever had a personal experience with a student or other person who has used some form of assistive technology to help them function in learning or everyday life? If so, describe what you observed from that experience in terms of meeting the special needs of those individuals.**

While in elementary school, there was student in my classroom with a disability. He had an aid that helped in during classes and he used a laptop to do his assignments. His eyesight was not the best so his handouts had larger print and when typing, he also used a different font. The other students in the class were aware that he had a disability but it didn’t make a difference when it came to making friends. The class was very accepting and understanding of his learning needs.

**From this assignment, what will you carry with you as you prepare to become a teacher – one that will, most likely, face the challenge of meeting the needs of special education students along with non-disabled learners?**

From this assignment I am much more familiar with the different technologies available for students with disabilities and I am aware of where I can access information about this topic. With classrooms becoming more inclusive, it is very likely that there will be students with disabilities in my future classroom who will use some sort of technology to assist them in their education. Also, incorporating many different types of technology into the classroom for all students is important. Demonstrating appropriate ways to use technology and developing activities all students can complete using technology is a great way to bring the class together. Overall technology is an extremely important tool to have in classrooms today.